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Women’s Studies

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University Sexual Assault Policy Paper

I am going to be attending the University of Puget Sound next fall and was surprised to see how much information and support was available for victims on their website. When entering the Puget Sound portal the sexual misconduct resource center is located under the student life tab. It was not very difficult to find and I feel that if I had to file a case for sexual assault I wouldn't have very much trouble on knowing what to do. I say this because the sexual misconduct page is titled with. “What to do”. For people who are raped or sexually assaulted Puget sound has a step by step guide on what to do. This involves finding somewhere safe and calling campus police or the real police. Next the victim is supposed to find medical attention and seek counseling. The final things to do are reporting your harassment to a harassment reporting officer or other sources. The school encourages victims to report their assault to help cope and get over the event. If you are sexually harassed the school urges victims to first confront their harasser and clearly state that they don’t approve of their behavior. I feel like this would be the last thing that a victim would want to do because seeing their harasser can only bring back the memory the victim is attempting to forget. The campus urges victims to reach out to the local Tacoma police department for help but it is written that the school works faster than the police department, which is hopefully true since this is a small liberal arts school I hope it has good punishments and ways of dealing with harassment.

The duty of deciding what happens to a report is thrust upon the title IX rep at the school, the Dean of Students, and also member of Human Resources, which seems like a possible loophole to allow perpetrators to get off without problem. The policy contains a very detailed description of consent that doesn’t include alcohol but says consent can not be given by an unconscious person, which applies to alcohol as well as drugs.

The policy later mentions alcohol and drugs in the part of consent labeled, incapacitation. This section talks about how it is a case by case situation on incapacitation because it depends on the accused's involvement in the victims incapacitation and their knowledge of it. In the Puget sound’s policy for sexual misconduct I expected to find the punishments that the school was giving out but I unexpectedly only found the different kinds of assault as they are defined by the school, and a statement made to protect victims from backlash after reporting, although I believe this small paragraph won’t do very much to stop trolls.

I was very excited when I found the contact information for the eleven harassment reporting officers at Puget Sound. This number is astounding to me I cannot believe the Puget Sound has so many people for support. This makes me feel very safe about where I am going to school next fall. Sadly the school isn’t as forward thinking as I thought, in the student policy and procedure for reporting and solving sexual harassment cases I found that sexual harassment is often solved with an informal solution, which can include frivolous acts such as: Attacker writing an apology letter to Victim, residential reassignment or educational remedies. I believe educational remedies could be the best form of punishment because the way to stop people from performing acts of sexual violence is to educate them to know that it’s not OK. This type of punishment is not normally used and the normal procedure for cases of sexual assault involves a hearing at the campus to determine the validity of the claim and the punishment for the perpetrator is declared guilty.

Reflection

This investigation positively changed my views on Puget Sound, I didn’t expect the school to have such great resources and people to speak with when you need help. I was particularly astounded that the school has eleven people employed to help counsel people struggling specifically with sexual assault and violence. I was surprised at how democratic the trial system was that is implemented in the school.

I was surprised at how easily I could find everything I needed to find for this project on the website. Countless resources and pages to help victims cope with their problem and educate others on the atrocities of sexual violence. While looking for statistics for sexual assault cases in the Puget Sound yearly report, I found that all bathrooms on campus have cards where you can report sexual harassment or any grievances. I like going to puget sound because It makes me feel like I can be apart of helping rape culture by being an educated and aware ally to my friends.

I think that Bellarmine did a fantastic job of preparing me for college and preparing me for people that will do bad things. Our justice summit in my Freshman year was on Human Trafficking and I remember thinking about how terrible this is and not wanting to believe that people actually did such terrible things. I have supported bellarmine's denim day and have always thought that Bellarmine does a lot of good with the money that have. I think it's very difficult to educate about sexual harassment at a school with all males but I think that Bellarmine and this class have done a good job at educating students on sexual assault and violence.

<https://www.pugetsound.edu/sexual-misconduct-resource-center/>